

cape Council for American Private Education outlook

"Voice of the Nation's Private Schools"

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Voucher Ballot Campaigns in California and Michigan

From TV ads to yard signs, from fact sheets to flyers, from buttons to bumper stickers, supporters and opponents of school choice ballot initiatives in California and Michigan have employed every campaign medium imaginable to win over voters. The spare-no-expense crusades (both sides in both states have collectively spent nearly \$75 million, according to *Washington Post* staff writer David S. Broder) are the most expensive efforts ever to persuade voters to take sides in ballot battles over vouchers.

California

California's Proposition 38 is the more ambitious of the two initiatives. It would provide every private school parent in California a voucher of \$4,000 per child. Parents of new private school students would be eligible for the vouchers first, but all parents would eventually be eligible by the end of a four-year phase-in period. Schools accepting vouchers would have to conduct the same academic testing required of public schools and would have to certify that their courses fulfill admission requirements for the state's colleges and universities. They would also have to meet certain other requirements, such as making financial statements available to parents and conforming to building codes.

The private school community has had mixed reactions to the initiative, reactions ranging from support, to oppo-

sition, to staying on the sidelines. The Catholic Church, which sponsors most of the private schools in the state, has taken a neutral position. In a statement on the measure, Catholic bishops said that while they generally supported parent choice initiatives and considered Proposition 38 to be "a step toward upholding the right of parents to choose the education best suited to the needs of their children," they were concerned that the measure

did not provide "special preference for children and families who are economically poor or in poorly-performing schools." The bishops also bemoaned the campaign's negative advertising, which, they said, pitted "one system of education against another."

High-tech entrepreneur Tim Draper has provided the deep pockets for the "Yes" side of Proposition 38. The bulk of the opposition funding has come from teacher unions.

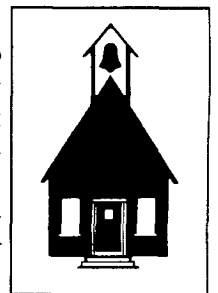
Michigan

Draper's counterpart in Michigan is Richard DeVos, the CEO of Amway. His funding has provided a huge lift to the campaign for Proposal 1, which would amend the state constitution to provide private school tuition vouchers for children in poor-performing public school districts. Parents in districts that fail to graduate at least two-thirds of

their students (about 30 of the 555 districts in the state) would receive scholarships worth one-half of the per pupil expenditure in the district (the state average expenditure is about \$6,300 per pupil). Better-performing districts could also participate in the program if the school board or voters elected to do so. The proposal would require competency testing for teachers in public schools and participating private schools.

The Michigan Association of Nonpublic Schools, a state CAPE affiliate, has supported Proposal 1, and the state's Catholic bishops have issued two pastoral letters urging Catholics to back the measure. "Parents have the primary responsibility for the education of their children," the bishops wrote. "To exercise that responsibility, parents need true freedom to choose the schools where they would like to send their children."

In its lead editorial November 1, *The Washington Post* said the polls suggest opponents of the Michigan measure will carry the day. The same is true of the California initiative. But the *Post* went on to say, "That would be too bad. ... To the many children losing out in the current system, some state-by-state experimentation might offer relief."



National Distinguished Principals Honored

Most educators agree that the center of success in a school is the principal. Last month, 66 of the most successful centers of success were named National Distinguished Principals by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP).

"Today's principals face an endless list of challenges," said U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley in announcing the awards. "Between the dual responsibilities of leading teachers in instruction and managing the school building and staff, a principal's work is truly never done." The secretary went on to say that the 66 honorees "have faced these challenges head on, and their strategies and subsequent success should be shared widely."

CAPE congratulates all the principals honored this year, including public school principals from each state, principals from Department of Defense schools and Department of State schools, and six principals from private schools. In keeping with Secretary Riley's suggestion that the awardees' stories be shared widely, we provide the following excerpts from the tribute prepared by NAESP for the awards banquet that took place last month in Washington, DC.

Carolyn T. Coffey - ELCA

Christ Lutheran School, CA

Carolyn Coffey values diversity. "I believe the staff must receive training in understanding various cultures," she stresses. "I also believe it is important for children to see themselves reflected in those who are educating them." To that end, Coffey provides "channels to increase respect for differences" and celebrates these differences in the cultural heritages of her 400 Pre-K-8 students at Christ Lutheran School.



To further promote a safe, secure,

and harmonious environment at Christ Lutheran, she introduced a student conflict-mediation program seven years ago that teaches children how to understand their own and others' feelings through role playing and story telling. The program trains upper-grade students to act as peer mediators in conflicts during recess.

Sister Mary Menegatti - NCEA

St. Ignatius of Loyola School, CA

It might seem that Sister Mary Menegatti has worked miracles at St. Ignatius School since she became its principal in 1994. Her hard work and resourcefulness have been key in lifting the inner-city school—where 65 percent live in poverty—from a deficit of \$81,000, to being debt-free today. Menegatti's gift for building partnerships has resulted in uncommon sources of support, including a group of grandfathers who volunteer as school maintenance workers. She has also shared this gift with others by helping spearhead an innovative regional development program, Vision of Hope, that supports eight urban parochial schools.



Carlota E. Morales - NCEA

St. Agatha Catholic School, FL

When Carlota Morales accepted the job of presiding over the opening of St. Agatha Catholic School in 1990, it was no ordinary challenge. Three grades would be housed in the parish hall and the rest of the school would operate within a shopping center until construction of their own building was completed. During her ten years as principal of the Pre-K-8 school—which



has a coed enrollment of 743 students—she has outfitted the school library with computers, enhanced instruction with technology, and established an instructional program to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities.

Daniel J. Netz - CSI

Pella Christian Grade School, IA

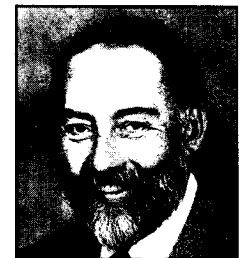
Anyone who thinks the principalship is an easy or glamorous job hasn't heard Daniel Netz's rundown of some of the unofficial tasks that fill his 60-hour work weeks: "As a servant leader responsible for the entire operation of the school, I find myself substituting in the classroom, attending fine arts and athletic events, occasionally driving the school bus or serving hot lunch, and cleaning up after sick students." A highlight in his tenure at the Pre-K-8 school was its winning distinction as a national Blue Ribbon School. He promotes top-notch teaching practices by actively participating on a schoolwide team that guides the development of academic standards and assessments, and by seeking grants and other funds to support teachers' summer curriculum work as well as resources for staff development.



Gordon S. Stuckert - LC-MS

St. Paul Lutheran School, GA

After nearly two decades of successful leadership of Lutheran schools in Illinois and Tennessee, Gordon Stuckert accepted the challenge in 1997 of opening St. Paul Lutheran, a Pre-K-8 school in Georgia. From the start at St. Paul, Stuckert focused on recruiting a highly skilled staff—includ-



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ing four former school administrators whom he convinced to return as classroom teachers. He has led his staff and school board in developing a mission statement and in proceeding through a school improvement process for accreditation.

Joseph E. Sine - NCEA

St. Charles Borromeo School, OK

To keep staff and students focused on a common vision, Joe Sine regularly "elaborate[s] on our mission—to be lifetime learners—and what it means to act that out in our classrooms and homes." Sine acts out that mission in part through his role in continually examining and improving the curriculum in collaboration with school community members. He is creative in cultivating resources to serve his Pre-K-8 school's 265 students. Ten years ago he launched an annual development drive that has raised over \$300,000 for his school, boosting its endowment from \$18,000 to \$157,000 despite the fact that half the money raised each year is spent on new programs and equipment. A grant he wrote created a consortium of five private schools that has allowed St. Charles to start a band program—through the sharing of a music teacher—for 152 students in grades 5-8.



National Ad Campaign for Choice

Surely by now you've seen one of the dramatic television spots or full-page newspaper advertisements promoting parent choice in education.

One eye-catching print ad asks readers to test their powers of reasoning by responding "Yes" or "No" to five statements. The first is "Having one national airline would be good for our country." In each successive statement the term "airline" is replaced by "clothing chain," "automobile company," "grocery store," and then in the fifth statement "education system." "Believe it or not," the ad declares, "there are people who still answer 'Yes' to question 5."

The \$20 million advertising campaign is the brainchild of Theodore J. Forstmann, founder and co-chairman (with John Walton) of the Children's Scholarship Fund, which has provided 40,000 private school scholarships to low-income children. Forstmann believes parents should be in charge of their children's education. "If a parent can't choose which school their child goes to, or what subjects they are taught or who teaches them, then what exactly are they in charge of?" he asks. "As we launch our ad campaign, we plan to shine the

light on some very old inaccuracies about education—and get the parent to understand what some of the possibilities for change really are."

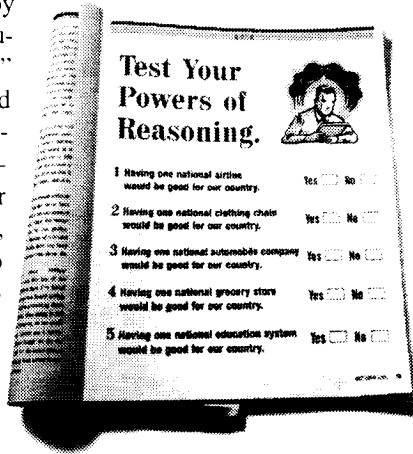
A Better Alternative

The "Powers of Reasoning" ad states there is a better alternative to government monopoly in education, a way that "comes down to two cherished principles—freedom and choice." Competition and choice would ensure quality and innovation, the ad asserts. "If parents were in charge of their kids' education...schools would innovate and work hard to be chosen."

Another ad in the series features quotes in support of school choice from prominent figures from the political left and right, including Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and John Breaux (D-LA), General Colin Powell, and Martin Luther King, III. "We must continue the work my father began," says King in the ad. "Education is the key to freedom and opportunity. ... Fairness demands that every child, not just the rich, has access to an education that will help them achieve their dreams."

Forstmann has a straightforward way of explaining the thinking behind the multi-million dollar ad campaign. "As Americans, we all believe that competition, freedom, choice, and equal opportunity are good things," he says. "It's time we instituted a system that applies these common values to public education."

For more information about the campaign, and to view the print and TV ads, visit the Web site of the Campaign for America's Children: www.parentsincharge.org



New Report on School Safety

The federal government last month released the most recent data on school crime and safety. Below are some key findings regarding private schools. The full report, *Indicators of School Crime and Safety*, is available at <http://nces.ed.gov>.

Students, 12-18, who in 1999 reported...	Public	Private
• having experienced violent victimization at school	2.5%	0.3%
• being bullied at school	5.3%	2.8%
• fearing being attacked or harmed at school	5.7%	1.7%
• being targets of hate-related words at school	13.8%	8.1%
• that street gangs were present at school	18.6%	4.4%
• that they avoided certain places in school for fear of their own safety	5.0%	1.6%



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What a difference a tiara makes.

Angela Perez Baraquio, the newly crowned Miss America, moved from teaching physical education at Holy Family Catholic Academy in Honolulu to advocating character education in schools across the country.



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She described the platform she intends to promote during her yearlong reign as "teaching students how to be good citizens and good people."

Smart, gracious, and unpretentious, the new Miss America seems like she will be an effective teacher on the national stage. Colleagues at Holy Family describe her as "down to earth" and having a "way with children." Even amid the excitement of the pageant, her concern for children was unmistakable. She said her goal was "to make the top 10 so my students would be on TV."

And indeed they were. The school

served as a setting for Miss Baraquio's pre-taped personal profile segment on the October 14 broadcast of the pageant. It also served as a gathering place for spirited supporters to watch her win.

The Catholic News Service reported that more than 900 members of the school and parish community got together for a potluck party in the schoolyard to view the pageant on three 20-foot TV screens.

• In a school choice clash of the Ti-

tans, former education secretary Bill Bennett squared off with Rev. Jesse Jackson on *Meet the Press* last month. Moderator Tim Russert, noting that 70 percent of black Americans under the age of 35 support vouchers, kicked-off the choice discussion by asking, "Why not give poor, black Americans the same opportunity that affluent whites have in sending their children to private schools?"

Jackson, arguing against what he called "vouchers for a few," said all children should have access to good education. Bennett said that in opposing

choice for poor families, Democrats "oppose their own basic constituency."

Both men managed to invoke biblical images during the discussion. Bennett, interceding for poor children like Moses pleading with pharaoh, said, "Let the people go." Jackson, summoning up the story of the lost sheep, said society should not provide a voucher to one sheep, but "comfort for all the sheep." He then suggested Jesus would oppose vouchers. "Jesus would never have chosen a voucher for one and not justice for all," he said.

• The many parents seeking scholarship assistance for private schools these days now have the convenience of one-stop shopping. A new publication, billed as "perhaps the largest single collection of scholarship resources," lists organizations "that offer financial support either to schools or to students and families to help offset tuition costs at private schools." Available free from the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), the 22-page document features an easy-to-use format that provides contact information, scholarship amounts, and any applicable restrictions. You can download the PDF document from the NAIS Web site at www.nais.org.

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